

## **Long-Term Care Facilities Visitation and Testing**

**September 30, 2020**

Beginning March 13, 2020, Iowa long-term care facilities began implementing guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) that outlined recommended restrictions to normal operations in an attempt to mitigate the entry and spread of COVID-19. On May 18, 2020, CMS released further guidance on how state and local officials could begin to loosen restrictions. Then on August 25 and September 17, 2020 additional information was released on requirements for long-term care facility testing and visitation.

Due to the most recent guidance released by CMS related to testing requirements and visitation, it was determined that the reopening guidance issued by IDPH and DIA on June 4, 2020, should be replaced by the guidance issued in this document. The goal is to align more closely with federal guidance and regulations to support regulatory compliance and balance resident and staff safety with quality of life.

The state has and will continue to collaborate with federal partners, long-term care associations, and stakeholders on how to responsibly ease restrictions in long-term care facilities while COVID-19 remains a concern in communities across the state. This guidance is based on currently available best-practice recommendations and evidence and may be updated and adjusted as additional information becomes available and response efforts evolve.

The guidance below is specifically targeted at long-term care facilities (e.g., nursing homes). Other facilities or congregate care settings, such as assisted living or residential care facilities, may choose to follow an independently developed framework for easing restrictions. Guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for COVID-19 mitigation strategies for assisted living congregate settings is found at:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/assisted-living.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/shared-congregate-house/guidance-shared-congregate-housing.html>

## Visitation and Communal Activities

On September 17, 2020 the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued [QSO-20-39-NH](#) outlining how facilities can safely conduct indoor and outdoor visitation as well as communal activities. This guidance provides the considerations for such activities in nursing facilities as well as reminders for regulatory requirements that will be enforced. Adherence to the Core Principles of COVID-19 Infection Prevention outlined in QSO-20-39-NH, including guidance provided by the [Center for Disease Control](#) (CDC), is critical to mitigating the impacts of COVID-19. State infection control resources continue to be available to provide technical assistance as needed. Further, CMS issued guidance on August 25, 2020, launching a training program that may be accessed at the [Quality, Safety & Education portal](#).

## Essential and Non-Essential Healthcare Personnel

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services included guidance on expectations related to the entry of healthcare workers and other providers into long-term care facilities. Screening of any personnel entering the facility must be performed, except as described for emergency medical services, and appropriate use of personal protective equipment and universal source control must be used consistent with guidance from the CDC at:

[COVID-19: Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of PPE  
Using Personal Protective Equipment  
Protecting Healthcare Personnel  
Isolation Precautions](#)

The state recognizes that salon and barber services are important for many individuals residing in long-term care facilities. In order to conduct these activities safely, a long-term care facility must perform a risk assessment to determine that barbers and beauticians are a low risk for entry. If that is determined, the following mitigation steps should be followed.

- Salons may open so long as the beautician or barber is properly screened when entering the facility and must wear a face covering or mask for the duration of time in the facility.
- The beautician or barber must remain in the salon area and avoid common areas of the facility.
- Salons must limit the number of residents in the salon at one time to accommodate ongoing social distancing.
- Staged appointments should be utilized to maintain distancing and allow for infection control.
- Salons must properly sanitize equipment and salon chairs between each resident; and the beautician or barber must perform proper hand hygiene.
- No hand-held dryers.
- Salons must routinely sanitize high-touch areas.
- Residents must wear a face mask during their salon visit.

## Access to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman

As described in [QSO-20-39-NH](#), long-term care facility residents must have access to the state's Long-Term Care Ombudsman.

## Compassionate Care Visits

Compassionate care visits are critical for residents in counties with reported positivity rates exceeding ten percent (10%). Facilities should use a person-centered approach, outlined in [QSO-20-39-NH](#), to identify the need for compassionate care visits. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has indicated the below as examples of compassionate care allowances.

- End-of-life scenarios.
- A resident, who was living with their family before recently being admitted to a nursing home, is struggling with the change in environment and lack of physical family support.
- A resident who is grieving after a friend or family member recently passed away.
- A resident who needs cueing and encouragement with eating or drinking, previously provided by family and/or caregiver(s), is experiencing weight loss or dehydration.
- A resident, who used to talk and interact with others, is experiencing emotional distress, seldom speaking, or crying more frequently.

## Cohorting and Dedicated Staff

Cohorting residents and staff is critical to prevent transmission of COVID-19 within the facility and the following must be present at all times.

- Dedicated space in facility and dedicated staff for cohorting and managing care for residents who are symptomatic or have a positive diagnostic test for COVID-19.
- Plan to manage new admissions and readmissions with an unknown COVID-19 status.
- Plan to safely manage residents who routinely attend outside medically necessary appointments (e.g., dialysis).
- New admissions or returning residents, no matter the source, test result, or COVID-19 status, should be quarantined for a minimum of the first 14 days of their stay. (More information on admissions and readmissions can be found [here](#).)

## Testing

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued new [regulations](#) requiring routine rapid COVID-19 testing for all long-term care facilities. These testing requirements, due to the rapid turnaround required for 24-48 hours, should be performed either onsite or through contracts with private labs. Iowa Department of Public Health guidance on antigen testing is found [here](#).

As outlined in previous guidance, the Iowa Department of Public Health recommends using a COVID-19 PCR test for all residents and staff in the below scenarios. The State Hygienic Lab is able support these testing efforts.

- Testing of all facility residents and staff in a shared area if there were three or more positive resident cases reported (facility is in state defined “outbreak”).
- Testing of symptomatic residents or staff.

## **Outbreak Definitions**

The state recognizes that different definitions of long-term care facility outbreak have been developed since the beginning of the pandemic. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services defines “outbreak” as any new COVID positive case. This definition triggers more frequent surveillance testing in the facility. The Department of Public Health defines “outbreak” as three resident cases within the same fourteen (14) day period. This definition triggers more active engagement with state and local public health partners.

## **Department of Inspections and Appeals Surveys**

Until further notice, surveys will be restricted in areas with county positivity rate above ten percent to the below.

- Investigation of complaints alleging there is an immediate serious threat to the residents’ health and safety (known as Immediate Jeopardy).
- Revisit surveys to confirm the facility has removed any Immediate Jeopardy findings.
- Focused infection control surveys.
- Initial survey to certify that the provider has met the required conditions to participate in the Medicare.
- Any other survey as authorized or required by CMS.
- State based priorities, such as hot spots.

	<b>Low County Positivity Rate (&lt;5%)</b>	<b>Medium County Positivity Rate (5-10%)</b>	<b>High County Positivity Rate (&gt;10%)</b>
<b>Outdoor Visitation:</b> accessible and safe outdoor spaces such as courtyards, patios, parking lots, large tents, etc.	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Indoor Visitation:</b> facilities are encouraged to use of chat boxes, plexiglass separators, etc. when possible.	Yes Visitation should occur according to the core principles of COVID19 infection prevention and facility policies, as well as indoor visitation guidelines outlined in <a href="#">QSO-20-39-NH</a> (beyond compassionate care visits).	Yes Visitation should occur according to the core principles of COVID19 infection prevention and facility policies, as well as indoor visitation guidelines outlined in <a href="#">QSO-20-39-NH</a> (beyond compassionate care visits).	Yes, but limited. Visitation should only occur for compassionate care situations according to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention and facility policies.
<b>Window Visits</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Compassionate Care Visits</b> (including end-of-life, and other life events listed above.)	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Barbers and Beauticians</b>	Yes, adhering to all mitigation steps.	Yes, adhering to all mitigation steps.	Yes, adhering to all mitigation steps.

While this guidance is focused on long-term care facilities (“nursing homes”), it is recommended that visitation guidance is similarly applied by assisted living facilities, intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities and congregate care settings.

Facilities, residents and interested parties can find the county positivity rates published by the state [here](#) or reference those published by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services [here](#). Facilities should be consistent with what data set they are using and document in their files.

## Appendix A Testing Supplies and PPE

	Contact	Information Needed
<b>Outbreak and Symptomatic Testing</b>	<b>State Hygienic Lab</b>	<p>To order testing supply: <a href="http://www.shl.uiowa.edu/kitsquotesforms/clinicalkit.xml">http://www.shl.uiowa.edu/kitsquotesforms/clinicalkit.xml</a></p> <p>To submit specimens for testing: <a href="http://www.shl.uiowa.edu/results/COVID-19_Electronic_Test_Request_Form_User_Guide.pdf">http://www.shl.uiowa.edu/results/COVID-19_Electronic_Test_Request_Form_User_Guide.pdf</a></p> <p>SHL courier will pick up specimens at your facility. To request a specimen pick up contact the SHL hotline 855-374-4692 before 11 am.</p>
<b>Personal Protective Equipment</b> (if unable to procure independently)	<b>Local Emergency Operations Coordinators</b>	<p>Be prepared to itemize the count of PPE needed, by type.</p> <p><a href="https://www.homelandsecurity.iowa.gov/documents/county/COORD_Public_List.pdf">https://www.homelandsecurity.iowa.gov/documents/county/COORD_Public_List.pdf</a></p>



## Appendix B

### Guidance for long term care facilities to access COVID-19 testing at the State Hygienic Laboratory

The State Hygienic Laboratory will perform COVID-19 PCR testing for long term care facilities in accordance with the guidance outlined in this document. This testing will be performed at no cost to the long term care facility. Iowa long term care facilities are NOT required to conduct testing at the State Hygienic Laboratory. Each long term care facility should decide which laboratory they want to use. If Iowa long term care facilities choose to conduct testing at the State Hygienic Laboratory, the procedures outlined below should be followed.

Order Testing Supplies: Long term care facilities should order testing supplies directly by filling out the order form available at: <http://www.shl.uiowa.edu/kitsquotesforms/clinicalkit.xml>

- If the ordering long term care facility is not listed in the system, facilities can enter their information under the "Shipping Information" header.

#### Contact Information

\*Name:

Department:

\*Telephone:

Email:

- Facility:
- 17413 - AASE HAUGEN HOMES INC, 4 OHIO ST, DECORAH, IA
  - 17469 - ABCM REHABILITATION CENTER, INDEPENDENCE WEST CAMPUS, PO BOX 777, INDEPENDENCE, IA
  - 17470 - ABCM REHABILITATION CENTER, INDEPENDENCE EAST CAMPUS, PO BOX 777, INDEPENDENCE, IA
  - 13812 - ACCORDIUS HEALTH AT ST MARY LLC, 800 E RUSHOLME, DAVENPORT, IA
  - 17757 - ACCURA HEALTHCARE OF AMES, 3440 GRAND AVE, AMES, IA
  - 18062 - ACCURA HEALTHCARE OF BANCROFT, 546 E RAMSEY ST, BANCROFT, IA
  - 17824 - ACCURA HEALTHCARE OF CARROLL, 2241 N WEST ST, CARROLL, IA
  - 17694 - ACCURA HEALTHCARE OF CHEROKEE LLC, 921 RIVERVIEW DR, CHEROKEE, IA
  - 17761 - ACCURA HEALTHCARE OF CRESCO, 701 VERNON RD, CRESCO, IA
  - 18097 - ACCURA HEALTHCARE OF KNOXVILLE LLC, 606 N 7TH ST, KNOXVILLE, IA
  - 18052 - ACCURA HEALTHCARE OF LE MARS, 954 7TH AVE SE, LE MARS, IA
  - 17753 - ACCURA HEALTHCARE OF MANNING LLC, 402 MAIN ST, MANNING, IA
  - 18104 - ACCURA HEALTHCARE OF MARSHALLTOWN, 2401 S 2ND ST, MARSHALLTOWN, IA
  - 18105 - ACCURA HEALTHCARE OF MILFORD, 1600 13TH ST, MILFORD, IA
  - 17612 - ACCURA HEALTHCARE OF NEWTON EAST LLC, 1743 S 8TH AVE E, NEWTON, IA
  - 17731 - ACCURA HEALTHCARE OF NEWTON WEST LLC, 2130 W 18TH ST, NEWTON, IA

If your facility is not listed or your address is incorrect, please enter your facility and shipping information below.

#### Shipping Information

Facility:

Street / P.O. Box:

City:

State:

Zip:

- Ordering long term care facilities should select “Virus Isolation and Detection Kit” from the drop-down and type the number of testing kits they need into the “Qty. of Kits” field.

**Kit Information**

\*Type of kit:

\*Qty. of Kits:

**Comments**

Order Tests: Long term care facilities without access to the State Hygienic Laboratory’s OpenELIS Web Portal should contact SHL (by calling 855-374-4692) to request facility registration.

Once registered, long term care facilities should submit all specimens using the electronic test request form. Instructions for using the electronic test request form are available at: [http://www.shl.uiowa.edu/results/COVID-19\\_Electronic\\_Test\\_Request\\_Form\\_User\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.shl.uiowa.edu/results/COVID-19_Electronic_Test_Request_Form_User_Guide.pdf).

Test Results: Long terms care facilities should log into the OpenELIS Web Portal to access resident and staff results.

Courier Service: To request a courier pick up of specimens from the long term care facility for delivery to the State Hygienic Laboratory call 855-374-4692.